



Contact:
National Park Service
Kathy Kupper
(202)208-6843
Kathy_Kupper@nps.gov

Contact:
National Park Foundation
Marjorie Hall
(202) 354-6480
Mhall@nationalparks.org

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Exceptional Volunteers and Park Ranger Receive Top Honors from the National Park Service and the National Park Foundation

2011 Yount and Hartzog Award Recipients Honored at Washington, DC Ceremony

(October 26, 2011) Washington, D.C. – Injured in Iraq, Staff Sergeant Bob Daly of the Pennsylvania National Guard returned home and discovered the best medicine for his wounds was Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area. Daly became a volunteer in the 70,000 acre park and found that the combination of natural beauty, meaningful work, and social interactions helped heal both his physical and mental wounds. Assisting visitors, maintaining trails, fixing mechanical equipment, clearing debris, and marking boundaries kept him active and supported his rehabilitation. Earlier today, Daly was presented with the George and Helen Hartzog Award for Outstanding Individual Volunteer Service by the National Park Service and the National Park Foundation.

“Bob had plenty of reasons to stay home and recuperate but instead he chose to give his time and talent to the park,” said National Park Service Director Jonathan B. Jarvis. “Wherever there was a need, there was Bob. He never allowed his injuries or limited mobility to stop him. He logged more than 1,800 hours as a volunteer last year. He is an example of the many dedicated men, women and children who care about their national parks and whose actions show it.”

Daly’s enthusiasm for national parks was echoed by others honored at today’s Washington, DC ceremony celebrating national parks and those that care for them. Also announced were the recipients of several other volunteer awards and the Harry Yount National Park Ranger Award.

Neil Mulholland, President and CEO of the National Park Foundation said, “The National Park Foundation greatly anticipates the Yount and Hartzog awards presentation each year as an outstanding way to recognize those who protect, preserve and enrich America’s national parks. These individuals stand out among an extraordinary pool of committed park stewards and it is our privilege to honor them.”

In 1970, then National Park Service Director George B. Hartzog, Jr. started the Volunteers-In-Parks Program. Last year, more than 220,000 VIPs donated 6.4 million hours of time to national parks. The George and Helen Hartzog Awards for Outstanding Volunteer Service recognize the exemplary contributions of these very important people.

- Nathaniel Green received the Hartzog Youth Volunteer Service Award. The 14-year-old has volunteered at the Anacostia Park skating pavilion for four years. Green’s enthusiasm, age, and local roots make it easy for him to connect with visitors and share information. He also regularly presents “Who Dirtied the Anacostia,” a program that investigates how personal actions have an effect on river ecology. He gives the program to school and youth groups, relating information from someone who lives in the community and didn’t realize the effects of his actions on the environment until he started helping at the park.

- Albert F. "Al" Larmann from the North Country National Scenic Trail received the Hartzog Enduring Volunteer Service Award. A leader in planning and completing the Central New York Chapter's segment of the trail, Larmann's volunteer efforts span a spectrum of local, regional and national involvement. Since 1997, he has given more than 10,000 hours of time. He initiated his local trail chapter's newsletter and has served as its editor since 1997. He has negotiated numerous agreements with local and state entities for trail routing and development and has managed major trail construction projects. Larmann was also instrumental in establishing a partnership between the trail's association, the park, and the New York Department of Environmental Conservation to determine a North Country National Scenic Trail route through approximately 150 miles of the Adirondack Park.
- The Battery Townsley Docents from Golden Gate National Recreation Area received the Hartzog Volunteer Group Service Award. This group has dedicated itself to preserving a World War II seacoast military fortification that had fallen into disrepair. To restore Battery Townsley, the docents spent hundreds of hours removing graffiti and hazardous materials, painting interior surfaces, restoring historic landscaping, and preserving delicate historic insignia and stenciling. They replaced gasoline generators with solar panels and removed non-native trees and plants. They also staff the battery, present interpretive programs, and continue to research and document historical information about the site. Because of their efforts, Battery Townsley is now open for public tours on a regular basis. They recently secured a 16-inch gun which was mounted aboard the *USS Missouri* when the Japanese surrendered in August 1945, saving this gun from the scrap heap. This will replace the original 16-inch gun that had been in Battery Townsley but was cut up and sold for scrap metal.
- The Summer Saunters Youth Group from the Ice Age National Scenic Trail received the Hartzog Youth Volunteer Group Service Award. Their idea was simple – take kids into nature to let them explore and discover the world independently. Summer Saunters is a vibrant and energy-packed youth program that incorporates volunteer service, service learning, and a week of hiking. Youth crews – students, teachers, and family members from the school districts of Lodi, Milwaukee, and Wausau – have volunteered more than 1,600 hours on the trail. Students gain a week's worth of invaluable exposure to nature, learn about area pioneers, glacial formations, and other environmental factors which are connected to Wisconsin academic standards.
- Valley Forge National Historical Park received the Hartzog Park Volunteer Program Service Award. The park made a concerted effort to form new volunteer partnerships and reach more people. Expanding existing opportunities for young people and diverse audiences led to a 14% increase in volunteers. Last year, 2,900 volunteers donated 53,000 hours of time.

Today's ceremony also honored Lisa Hendy as the recipient of the 2011 Harry Yount National Park Ranger Award for excellence in the field of rangers. This award, the highest honor bestowed on a park ranger, is named after the first park ranger, hired in Yellowstone in 1880.

"We count on rangers to tackle the toughest assignments; to protect the nearly 300 million people who visit parks annually," said Jarvis. "Each year, we ask those rangers to single out one among them that epitomizes the ranger ethic and we give that person the Yount Award. This year we honor Lisa Hendy, supervisory park ranger at the Grand Canyon National Park."

Hendy can respond to any type of emergency call. She fights structural and wild land fires, provides advanced life support as a paramedic, rappels over the edge of the canyon to rescue people, performs mountaineering and climbing patrols, carries out law enforcement duties, serves on the helicopter crew, performs technical and swift water rescue,

searches for lost hikers, plans special events, and monitors archeological sites. A fellow ranger said that no matter what happens, if Lisa is on the scene, everything will be OK

Hendy, a ranger since 1995, has worked at Grand Canyon National Park the last seven years. Prior assignments include Yellowstone, Rocky Mountain, and Arches National Parks. Hendy praised her fellow rangers and thanked all those who have taught her along the way.

“Rangers are skilled enough to navigate the country’s most rugged wilderness and most volatile waterways,” she said. “They are the medic you want when you have slipped over the edge and the rescuer you need when you are in trouble. They save lives. They also do anything else needed to protect the park and the people in the park. They rehabilitate trampled campgrounds, mend fence line on the boundaries, teach children how to release a trout without hurting it, stir backcountry compost toilets, and direct traffic through wildlife jams. I am grateful daily to be a member of this family we call rangers.”

Photos and additional information about the Hartzog Awards are available at <http://www.nps.gov/aboutus/hartzog-awards.htm>

Photos and additional information about the Yount Award are available at <http://www.nps.gov/aboutus/harry-yount-award.htm>

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